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LIFE'S COMEDY

FIRST SERIES

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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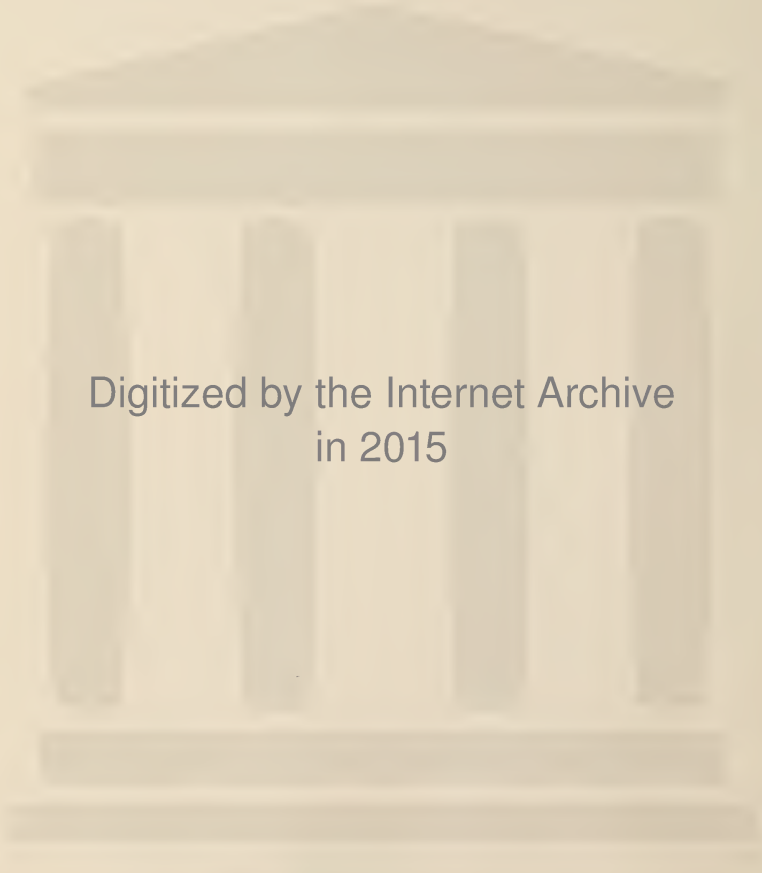
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LIFE'S COMEDY

FIRST SERIES

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK, MDCCCXCVII

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LIST OF ARTISTS.

THE AMERICAN GIRL.

CHARLES DANA GIBSON, ... Pages 1, 4, 8, 11, 16-17, 20, 29, 30
O. TOASPERN, ... Pages 2, 12, 15, 19, 32
ALBERT D. BLASHFIELD, ... Pages 21, 25, 26
T. S. SULLIVANT, ... Page 6
C. J. BUDD, ... Page 9
E. DUFNER, ... Page 18
A. B. WENZELL, ... Pages 3, 7, 13, 23, 28, 31
S. W. VAN SCHAICK, ... Pages 5, 10, 27
HY. MAYER, ... Pages 6, 25
W. P. HOOPER, ... Page 8
F. LOUIS MORA, ... Page 14
C. H. FUMIÈRE, ... Page 22
C. J. WECHSLER, ... Page 24

SWEETHEARTS AND LOVERS.

O. TOASPERN, . . . Pages 3, 6, 9, 15, 23, 26, 29
S. W. VAN SCHAICK, ... Page 7
A. B. WENZELL, . . Pages 13, 14, 19, 21, 24
F. W. READ, ... Page 31
HY. MAYER, ... Page 20
WM. E. PARKER, ... Page 28
CHARLES RELYEA, ... Page 18
A. J. KELLER, ... Page 4
CHARLES DANA GIBSON, Pages 1, 5, 12, 16-17, 22, 28, 30
W. H. HYDE, ... Pages 2, 27
T. S. SULLIVANT, ... Page 11
T. V. CHOMINSKI, ... Page 25
C. H. JOHNSON, ... Page 20
W. L. SHEPPARD, ... Page 18
T. K. HANNA, JR., ... Page 8

THE AMERICAN FAMILY.

CHARLES DANA GIBSON, ... Pages 1, 5, 11, 13, 15, 16-17, 19, 22, 25, 27
O. TOASPERN, ... Pages 3, 8, 20, 24, 29, 32
FRANK O. SMALL, ... Page 6
WILLIAM E. PARKER, ... Page 7
F. W. READ, ... Pages 15, 18
C. H. JOHNSON, ... Page 21
R. W. LANE, ... Page 24
WILLIAM McNAIR, JR., ... Page 26
W. H. HYDE, ... Pages 9, 12
WILLIAM H. WALKER, . . . Pages 10, 14, 30
T. K. HANNA, JR., ... Pages 4, 29
C. BROUGHTON, ... Pages 2, 27
W. A. CLARK, ... Page 15
F. P. ENGLAND, ... Page 23
HY. MAYER, ... Page 25
T. J. FOGARTY, ... Page 31

OUR BACHELORS.

O. TOASPERN, ... Pages 5, 8, 11, 17, 22
A. B. WENZELL, ... Pages 4, 28
A. J. KELLER, ... Pages 9, 34
S. W. VAN SCHAICK, ... Pages 12, 29
T. K. HANNA, JR., ... Page 16
"SPIKE" (JAMES PIKE), ... Page 20
CHARLES DANA GIBSON, Pages 3, 6, 15, 18-19, 24, 26, 30, 33
R. A. BRIDGES, ... Pages 7, 14, 23, 27, 32
J. T. BEGGS, ... Page 10
T. S. SULLIVANT, ... Pages 13, 20, 29
W. H. HYDE, ... Page 21
T. J. FOGARTY, ... Pages 25, 31

LIFE'S COMEDY.

THE AMERICAN GIRL.

"They tell awful stories about her. Do you think there is any truth in them?"
"I'm afraid not."

A FLIRTATION.

A SALUTATION FROM THE PAST

A MATRIMONIAL AXIOM.

"The wrong man? But that is vague. Who is the wrong man?"
"The man a girl marries, of course."

SHE stood by a door that was festooned with flowers,
While the sound of the waltz floated lazily through ;
And young bloods of fashion and maids with fat dowers
Stood watching us, while I was tying her shoe.

She wore a red stocking,
soft, delicate silk.
Her ankle just turned to
perfection—yes, two,
And the edge of her petti-
coat, whiter than milk,
I saw ; and I trembled—
when tying her shoe.

Ah me ! for the days of young love and young life,
For the days when my cares were both trifling
and few !
Just seven long years I've been calling her "wife,"
And now think it a bore—when I'm tying her
shoe.

Tom Hall.

Fashion produces a certain uniformity in the street that is less noticeable

At the seashore.

The sweet girl graduate trving in vain to find something she does not know already.

AS BELINDA TRIPS THE STAIR.

IN her cool, dim-lighted parlor,
Many thoughts come to me there,
While I wait to hear the music,
As Belinda trips the stair.

I have come with bold intention,
Her displeasure I will dare,
But my coward heart beats faster
As Belinda trips the stair.

I can hear her gentle footfall,
Hear the swish of raiment there,
Coming to me nearer, nearer,
As Belinda trips the stair.

From her step I try to reason :
Does she not, or does she care ;
All I know is, joy is coming,
As Belinda trips the stair.

MacGregor Jenkins.

OVERHEARD.

He: And I'll bet I steal a kiss from you
"I'll bet you two kisses you can't."

LIFE'S COMEDY.

"Miss—er, I beg pardon, Mrs. Wrynkle——"

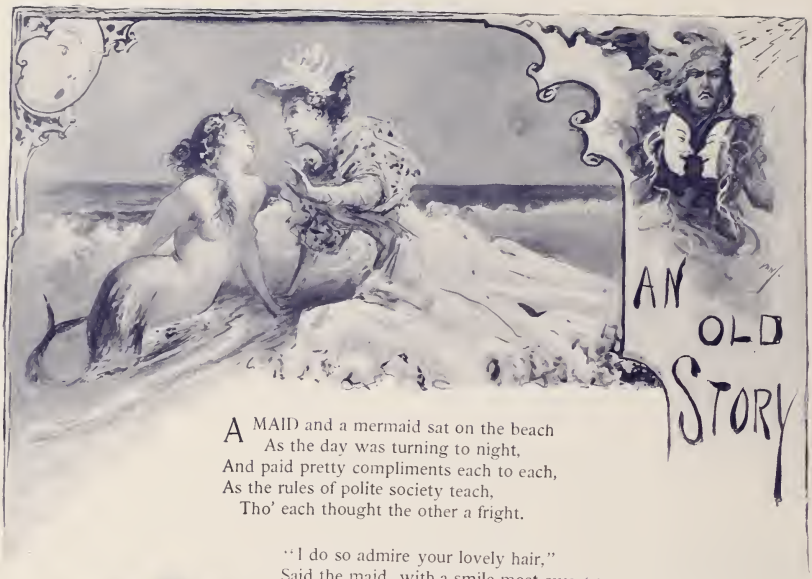
"You were right first, Mr. Oldbo. I am not yet plucked from the parent stem."

"Take courage, Madam. You know that Naomi, the daughter of Enoch, was 580 years old when she married."

The Coming Woman.

IN TARDYVILLE.

"A lively visit in Philadelphia! Then they are not as slow as we hear they are?"
"Oh, yes, they are! Why, just the other day a woman over there didn't die till she was 121 years old."



A MAID and a mermaid sat on the beach
As the day was turning to night,
And paid pretty compliments each to each,
As the rules of polite society teach,
Tho' each thought the other a fright.

"I do so admire your lovely hair,"
Said the maid, with a smile most sweet :
"I'm sure it must be your fondest care,
"It's soft and it falls right down—well there—
"I ALMOST said to your FEET"

"Oh ! do not distress yourself, I pray,"
The mermaid at once replied.
"I'm not in the least bit sensitive ; they—
"I mean YOUR feet, aren't they in your way ?"
And the mermaid laughed aside.

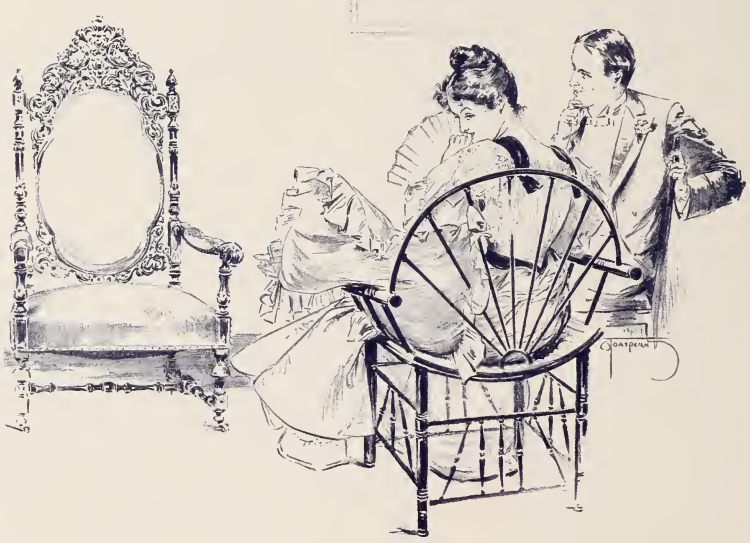
The maid sprang up, and her eyes were bright,
She was dressed in a gown from France.
"O ! Isn't the ocean divine to-night ?
"And the waves, O ! aren't they feathery light !
"My ! Don't you just long for a dance ?"

And the ocean jeered at the maid ashore,
While the mermaid downward flung.
And the moon came up (as it has before)
And said, "Dear me, it's the old uproar,
"And all o' a woman's tongue."

N. P. Babcock.

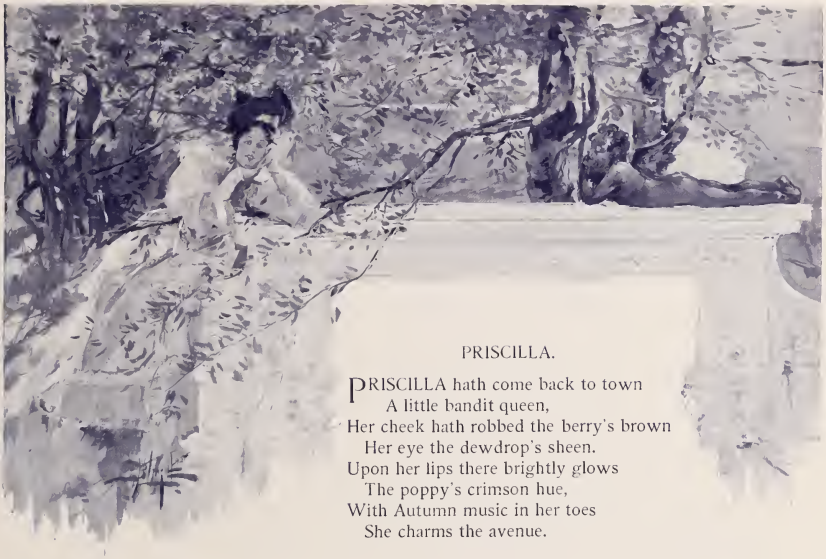
NOT THE SAME.

"I love, and I am loved."
"Then you must be perfectly happy."
"But it isn't the same man!"



A GIVE AWAY.

HE: I wonder if that chair is big enough for two?
SHE (INADVERTENTLY): Oh, yes, I KNOW it is.



PRISCILLA.

PRISCILLA hath come back to town
A little bandit queen,
Her cheek hath robbed the berry's brown
Her eye the dewdrop's sheen.
Upon her lips there brightly glows
The poppy's crimson hue,
With Autumn music in her toes
She charms the avenue.

Alas! how wildly hearts will beat
That late kept slowest time;
Alas! how many a snowy sheet
Will meet its fate in rhyme!
Laugh, Cupid, laugh, with saucy glee
At all the pangs in store,
But never point thy dart at me—
My heart was hers before.

Samuel Minturn Peck.

IN A TWENTIETH CENTURY CLUB.

"Why don't you fetch your brother here some night?"

"Oh, I think it's a bad atmosphere for a young man who has been carefully brought up."

A KNOWLEDGE OF MEN.

"He dropped me for a girl with more money."
"Yes; but that's no sign he doesn't love you."

SOME AMERICAN GIRLS GO ABROAD AND RE

N EMPTY-HANDED. OTHERS PICK UP SOMETHING.

LIFE'S COMEDY.

"No, she can't keep a secret. The other day I confided to her that I was going to marry her uncle, and the silly thing went and told him."

A BACHELOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

"Why are you taking all those photographs of men to the country?"
"I don't want to forget how a man looks."

MISS JONES.

YOU may mention her name, but it never conveys
An idea of the exquisite tones
Of her voice or her sparkling, bewildering ways,
For her name—it is simply, "Miss Jones!"

It gives you no hint of her golden-brown hair;
Of her eyes that outshine precious stones;
Of the flash of her wit, or her highly bred air,
When they merely allude to "Miss Jones."

A HONEYMOON EVE.

It leaves you to guess at the men in her train,
And her suitors' expiring groans;
At the charm that proves fatal to many a swain—
Unexpected in every-day "Jones."

But when you have seen the effect of her glance
On raw youth or decrepit old bones,
You'll admit that a knight never shattered a lance,
For a "Queen of the Lists" like "Miss Jones."

If her name could be changed, what a gain it would be—
A fact which she cheerfully owns;
But, at present, you see, she's confided to ME,
She prefers to stay simply—"Miss Jones!"

Harry Romaine.

IN VELO VOLUPTAS.

"Did your daughter have any trouble with her French while you were abroad?"
"Not a bit. It was the natives French that bothered her."

NERVOUS.

Uncle Treetop: We must put in a day on the river; the fish are biting now.
Jess, from the city: Is their bite poisonous?

A MOTION IN HER MIND.

"When he went abroad he threw up his entire business."
"Gracious! What a passage!"

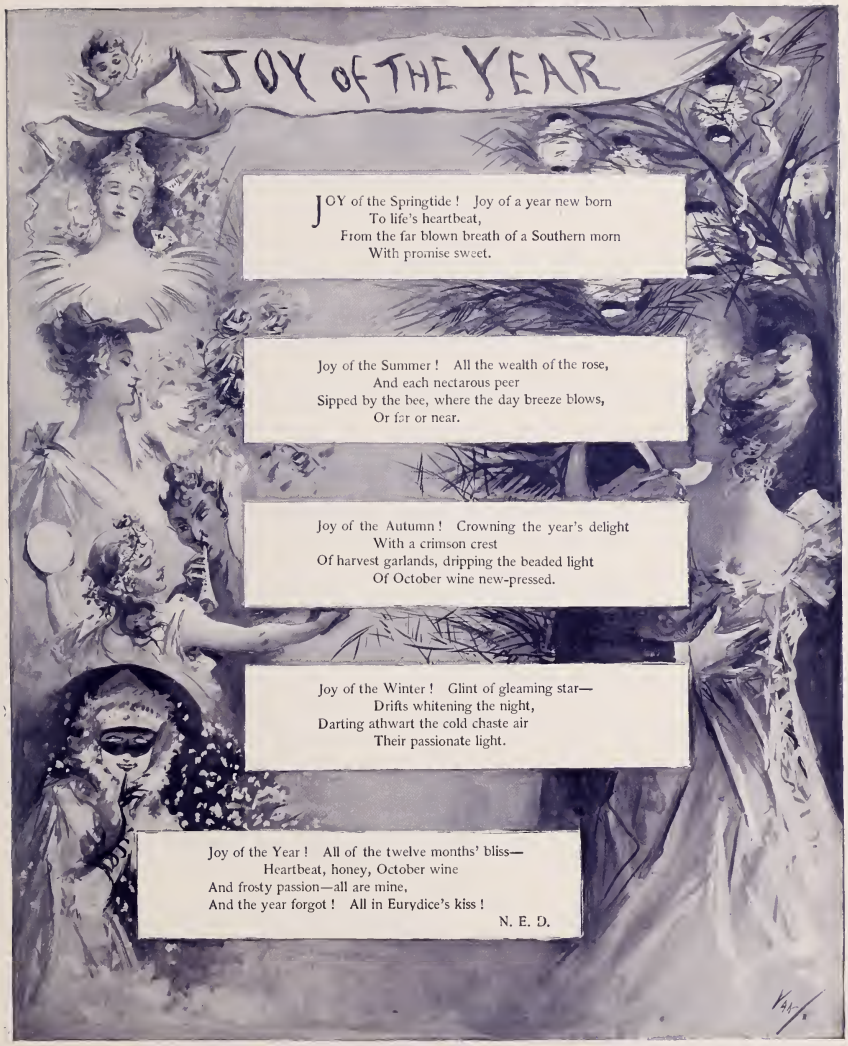
WHEN JACK PROPOSED.

I Meant to keep quite calm and cool,
And not behave, just like a fool,
When Jack proposed.
Intended to be dignified,
And say, "Perhaps, I'll be your bride
If——I'm disposed."

In spite of all I thought to do,
My plans so cherished, ne'er came true,
When Jack proposed.
I laid my head against his breast,
And——Jack can tell you all the rest,
If——he's disposed.

It did look queer, but——

Edward was behind.

ST VALENTINE
ALBERT D. BLASHFIELD.

JOY of THE YEAR
JOY of the Springtide! Joy of a year new born
To life's heartbeat,
From the far blown breath of a Southern morn
With promise sweet.
Joy of the Summer! All the wealth of the rose,
And each nectarous peer
Sipped by the bee, where the day breeze blows,
Or far or near.
Joy of the Autumn! Crowning the year's delight
With a crimson crest
Of harvest garlands, dripping the beaded light
Of October wine new-pressed.
Joy of the Winter! Glint of gleaming star—
Drifts whitening the night,
Darting athwart the cold chaste air
Their passionate light.
Joy of the Year! All of the twelve months' bliss—
Heartbeat, honey, October wine
And frosty passion—all are mine,
And the year forgot! All in Eurydice's kiss!
N. E. D.

"Her father won over $2,000 from the Baron last month at cards."

"And then the Baron asked him for her hand?"

"Yes. He wanted to get his money back."

A LOGICAL DEFINITION.

SHE: What does it mean when a man threatens to commit suicide because you refuse him?
THE WIDOWER: It means he prefers the refrigerator to the frying-pan.

IN PHILADELPHIA

"Did you have a gay time in New York?"

"Yes, indeed; we went all through the Bible House, and I got fitted to a new pair of spectacles."

"Is she the daughter of a hundred Earls?"
"No, but she's the daughter of a million dollars."

A PRUDENT MAID.

"Jack writes he has been playing poker with papa, and papa writes he can't possibly send me a check for a month."
"What on earth are you going to do?"
"Send for Jack."

LIFE'S COMEDY.

SWEETHEARTS AND LOVERS.

THE FIANCÉE: But can we afford such a house, dearest? They say one's rent should only be a fourth of one's income.
"But this is a good deal less than one-fourth of your father's income."

IN THE OTHER SENSE.

"You were embarrassed when you proposed to me, George. Were you not?"
"Yes. I owed over $20,000."

DELAYS ARE DANGEROUS.

"Don't you think you would better make him wait a year?"
"Dear me, no! Why, at the end of the year I might not want to marry him."

"So you let Mr. Clinker kiss you last night?"
"Yes. How did you know?"
"He asked me to-day if I would forgive him."

"You are getting round-shouldered since you have become engaged to her."
"Very likely; but you ought to see the muscles in my arms."

HIS MISCALCULATION.

HE: Certainly a New York flat would be large enough for us two.
SHE: Not with the present style of sleeves.

WRITTEN AFTER READING MUCH SOCIETY VERSE.

WHEN first I saw fair featured
Grace,
In dainty, tailor fashioned gown,
I fell in love with her sweet face
And pooh-poohed at her escort Brown.
The fellow's rich, but such a clown!
I did not feel he'd rival ME.
I, Reginald de Courcy Browne,
With wealth and—looks, and pedigree.

I set the man a red hot pace;
It was the talk of all the town;
I KNEW that I was loved by Grace—
I knew it by that yokel's frown.
MY ancestors won great renown,
While Brown has no ancestral tree.
I KNEW I could the fellow down,
With wealth and—looks, and pedigree.

She's married now; has rare point lace,
And jewels fit to deck a crown.
The man who calls her "darling Grace"
Is not the fellow they call Brown.
No, I'M the happiest man in town;
I knew she'd not say no to ME,
One rarely sees Dame Fortune frown
On wealth and—looks, and pedigree.

ENVOY.

You thought that Grace WOULD marry Brown,
As in most ballads that you see;
But SHE did not. For her no clown—
But wealth and—looks, and pedigree.

CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS.

"Now that we are engaged, I really think you might give me a kiss."

"No-o, I mustn't, but (as a happy thought strikes her) mamma told me that if I went out in the canoe I must sit perfectly quiet, and not move until you told me I could."

"You love another, Jack."

"How can you talk that way, dearest? I've kissed you thirty times in the last two minutes."

"But if you loved me you wouldn't keep count."

A SCIENTIFIC ELOPEMENT.

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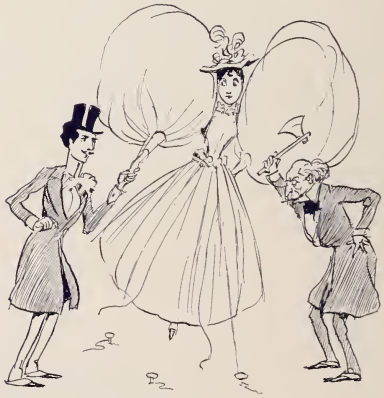

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"A fit husband for my daughter! Why, in the first place, she is half a head taller than you."
"Well, sir, I don't expect to be so short after I am married."

WAR TO THE KNIFE.

The Plain One: Shall you marry Jack if I refuse him?
"Yes, and if you accept him."

A HONEYMOON TALK.

"How ridiculous you were when you proposed to me! Why did you get down on your knees?"
"I didn't want you to come and sit in my lap."

LIFE'S COMEDY.

HE HAS HAD OTHER AFFAIRS.

"Isn't that a new ring?"
"It's new to me."

FITTED FOR EACH OTHER.

"So there will be nothing to conceal after we are married, dearest. I may as well tell you that I smoke cigarettes, play poker, drink and am rarely home before one o'clock in the morning."

"I am glad to hear you say so. I was afraid we wouldn't be perfect companions."

GOLF IS NOT THE ONLY

AME ON EARTH.

AT THE CENTRAL OFFICE.

"Is that Miss Flirter? This is Mr. Sophtly. You danced ten times with Mr. Mashely last night, so you may consider our engagement broken."

TELEPHONE GIRL (in Central Office): Ring off, please.

TO HER FIANCEE: I was telling papa of your narrow escape when your dog-cart turned over, and he said that Providence took care of drunken men and fools, which was very unkind of him. But I assured him that you were PERFECTLY SOBER. Then he said he believed you WERE; and wasn't that nice in him!

CHOLLY (afraid to make a start): It may be imagination, ye know, but your bull dog always looks larger to me at night than in the day time.

"That's probably because papa lets him out nights and takes him in mornings."

He (a practical economist): Darling, do you return my love?
"Well, it's the only thing you have ever given me that I can return."

"Why, you've already had four wives!"
"But they are not alive, dearest."

HER TURN.

Miss Vivian (to editor who once declined one of her poems): Owing to an overstock of such articles already on hand, I am compelled to decline your offer with thanks.

A POEM OF LOVE AND SORROW.

"OH! my precious little darling!
You will spoil me, I'm afraid,
With your winsome ways of welcome;
Can they ever be repaid?

What can I, a common mortal,
Ever do to worthy be?"
"Pay this bill, you dear, sweet bubby,
For the cart you gave to me."

Intemperate Suitor (bitterly): I suppose you would rather work for a living
"That's what I am trying to guard against."

THE POET: When you talked with your father, did he seem pleased with the idea of our marriage?
THE GIRL: Oh, yes! He said he had always been afraid that I might leave him.

A DISTANT HINT.

"Don't you feel close in this room, Bess?"
"I don't know. I might feel closer."

She: I am surprised that her father consented.

He: I had two sets of references, you see. One for the old man, that I was a paragon of virtue and industry, and one for the girl, that I was going an awful pace.

"You looked so sheepish when you proposed to me."
"And you looked so wolfish when you accepted me."

MUSIC OF THE SPRING.

RIVALS.

"You should get him to sign the pledge before you marry him."

"Why, he doesn't drink."

"No, but he may be tempted to later."

THE DREADED INTERVIEW.

HE: I'm sure I don't know what to say to him.

SHE: Just say, "Mr. Norris, I want to marry your daughter," and then papa will say the rest.

AN IDEAL DEVICE.

Prevents the necktie from slipping up the collar. Every man should have one.

On the Bamboo: I've had fully a dozen offers of marriage lately.
"Mercy me! Good ones?"
"Yes. All from George."

DEFINITIONS.

JEANNETTE: This is what you might call a sardine sandwich.

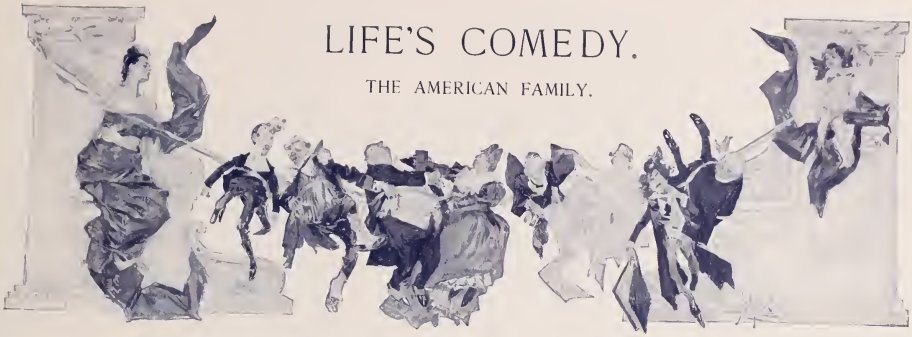
HAROLD: Oh, no! This is a tongue sandwich with the tongue on the outside

FOR SIZE AND SHAPE.

"The first thing that phrenologist exclaimed when he saw me was: 'What a head!'"
"Where were you the night before?"

LIFE'S COMEDY.

THE AMERICAN FAMILY.



"If we go to Europe, Cynthia, I don't want you to marry any of them counts or dukes. You just wait until we run across some king in reduced circumstances."

THE BEST OF REASONS.

"Do you remember, Julian, why they shot poor Saint Sebastian full of arrows?"
"'Cause they hadn't any gun."

BASED ON EXPERIENCE.

"What makes the sides of the balloon stay out, Ma?"
"Because it is filled with gas."
"Is it a case of colic?"

Mr. B.: You are trying very hard to be a man, it seems.
Mrs. B.: Well, don't you think we need one in the family?

LIFE'S COMEDY.

THAT SON-IN-LAW.

"Papa, George says he is very much worried about his income."

"I shouldn't think he would worry about a little thing like that."

"Mamma, do liars ever go to Heaven?"
"Why, no, probably not."
"Has Papa ever told a lie?"
"I suppose not; he may have."
"And, Mamma, have you ever told one? Uncle Joseph has, and I have, and almost everybody."
"I don't know but I have sometimes."
"Well, it must be lonesome up there with only God and George Washington."

"No, Marm, there were no centenarians before 1402."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I've been reading the papers, and all the people over a hundred have used tobacco ever since they were children, and tobacco wasn't discovered before that."

FORWARDED.

"He has been dead two years, and to-day I received a bill against him with the request to forward it."

"Why, what did you do with it?"

"Put it in the fire."

HE: Well, I must be off. Going to the station to meet my wife's eldest sister.

SHE: But she can find her way to your house.

HE: She can. But if I meet her in public I won't have to kiss her.

ANOTHER NEW WOMAN.

"Lady, I understand yer want a nurse what can ride a bicycle wid yer children."

"A man has no idea how mean other people can be till he asks them to do him a favor."
"Nor how strong-minded he can be till his wife asks him for one."

THE ADVANCED WOMEN.

"Why do you men like the Clubs so well? Is it because they are so homelike?"
"It is because they are not homelike."

LIFE'S COMEDY

"Did I understand you to say, John, that the tenor married the contralto?"
"Yes. The choir was to be disbanded and that was their only means of continuing their quarrel."

NOWADAYS.

"My dear Susan, I wish you would keep your trowsers on your own side of the closet."

"But he is worse than he looks, Uncle. He has given up saying his prayers because he is not afraid in the dark any more."

"Ma, that little baby across the street hasn't any teeth."

"Of course not, Tommy. You didn't have any when you were that small."

"But that baby's Pa is a dentist."

"John, dear, we must take up some kind of reform this year. Now, if I take up dress reform, what will you take?"

"Chloroform."

He thought he had made such a good marriage, an

R JIM.

w her father leaves everything to his unmarried daughters.

NO HEEL-TAPS.

"Is the moon up yet?"
"Yes; if I swallowed it."

SYMPATHETIC PLAIN FRIEND to inconsolable young widow: The last time I met your dear husband he stopped and spoke to me with such a sunny greeting that I was the happier for it all day long.

YOUNG WIDOW, still oblivious to everything except her loss: Yes, that was just like dear David. There was no woman so humble, or homely, or unattractive, or dull, but that he could find something pleasant to say to her, and would take pains to say it.

NEW SPECIMENS.

"Do you know, some of those doughnuts I made yesterday are missing."
"Don't be alarmed, dear. I took them downtown to a friend of mine."
"Did he eat them?"
"Heavens, no! He is a geologist."

LIFE'S COMEDY.

"Here is the account of a man who had four wives, and he is to suffer for it."
"What, again?"

RETRIBUTION.

Wife: If I had known before we were married that you swore so, I never would have married you.
The Husband (sadly): That's what comes of being a hypocrite.

"So, sir, you went to that disgusting ballet!"
"Yes, darling, I——"
"You ought to be ashamed of yourself; but did you see anything that would be a good design for a bathing suit?"

"Rice!"

MIXING SALAD.

WHEN Polly, fair and deft of hand,
Prepares to make the salad dressing,
With fork and spoon I near her stand—
Man like—my helplessness confessing.

Yet when I try to lend my aid
In manner meant to be quite pleasing,
She says to me—this cruel maid:
"The lemons, Tom—*they* need the squeezing."

A WHISPERED DIALOGUE.

THE HUSBAND: You are right! It must be burglars! Where is my revolver?

THE WIFE: Down in the library over the desk. You know I tied ribbons on it for an ornament.

"So he really fell in love with that widow!"
"No. She married him before he had a chance to."

ANXIOUS FATHER: A boy?

THE NEWCOMER: Sold again! I'm a girl!

"Don't you think that was a marriage for lucre, Bishop?"

"Humph. I thought so when I performed the ceremony, but I haven't seen any of the money yet."

Bishop Gullem: You mustn't grieve too much, my dear sister. Remember that though your dear husband has left this mortal body he is still with you.

"That isn't going to affect the insurance, is it?"

Mrs.: The dentist says I must have a tooth out.

Mr.: Never mind. It can't happen many more times.

CONSOLATION.

SHE: Poor Uncle! And to be eaten by undiscovered savages!
"Yes, but he gave them their first taste of religion."

A REWARD FOR THE GRINDER.

"Papa gave me two pennies to put in the plate in church."
"Do you know who those pennies were for?"
"Course I do; for the organ man. I heard the music."

PRIVILEGE OF SENIORITY.

"Stop crying, Reginald. Your Grandmother's turn comes next."

YOUNG TOURIST: What shall we try?
HONEST WAITER (in a whisper): Try another restaurant

LIFE'S COMEDY

MODIFIED CONVICTIONS.

"I think I will have a special bicycle sermon next Sunday."
"Why, only a few Sundays ago you preached a sermon denouncing the wheel."
"Yes, but since then nearly every one in the parish has bought one."

LIFE'S COMEDY.

OUR BACHELORS.

A DISCERNING FRIEND.

THE ARTIST: How do you like it?

THE FRIEND: Best work you ever did. What does it represent

LIFE'S COMEDY.

STRABISMUS: May I have the honor of the next dance?
TWO FAIR ONES (eagerly rising): With pleasure!

SHE: They tell me you are fickle.
HE: Impossible! Why, I have been engaged to two girls now for over a year.

AT THREE IN THE AFTERNOON.

"Hello, old man! Been up all night?"
"No; I'm going to take a Harlem girl to a theatre party in Brooklyn."

THE THOUGHTFUL SON.

"Is it drue, Bozilski, that your son, Isaac, spent all his money for a new suit of clothes and then shot himself?"
"No, he knew petter. He dook boison, und dot suidt of clothes vos chust as goot as new."

NOT AN UNMIXED EVIL.

"So you think I am drinking too much?"

"No, but I think you will kill yourself if you keep on."

HE SCORED.

"Look here," he said, coming breathlessly into her presence, "you are the goal of my affections; are you not?"

"You have always assured me that I was."

"And I've been making steady gains toward you, haven't I?"

"You have."

"And I'm on your fifteen-yard line, am I not?"

"Yes, I guess you are."

"Well, your father kicked me out of the house last night, and I want ten yards for interference, see!"

LIFE'S COMEDY.

"I hadn't been talking with him three minutes before he called me an ass. What sort of a person is he, anyway?"
"Well, I never knew him to tell a lie."

THE TEACHINGS OF ADVERSITY.

The Bitter One: I tell you a man changes his mind about his friends and enemies.

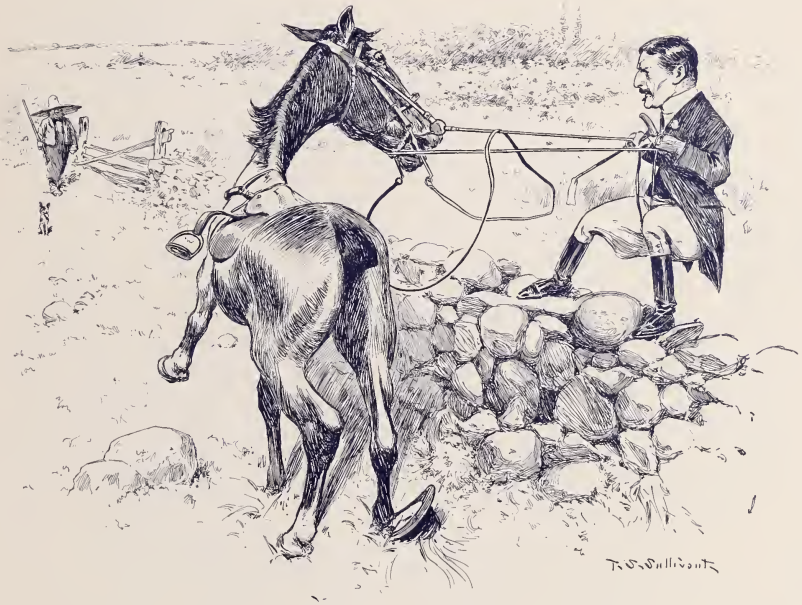
"How so, old man?"

"His enemies stop hitting him when he's down, but it's then that his friends begin."

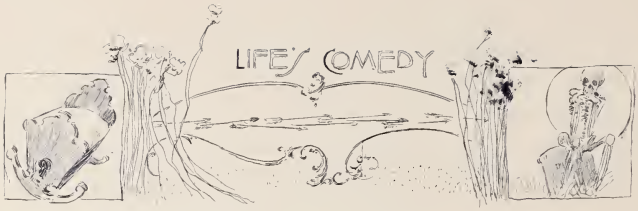
IN A VERY LOW TONE.

"Berty means well, but he has a habit of telling all he knows."

"Yes, I noticed that last night. I was alone with him nearly five minutes."



"Not getting on very well."



A FRIEND'S ADVICE.

The Tenor: It's very hard to keep the wolf from the door.
"Why don't you try singing to it?"

A BACHELOR'S DREAM.

She: How did he enter college? He isn't sixteen yet.
He: No. But he is over six feet, and has a chest measurement of forty inches.

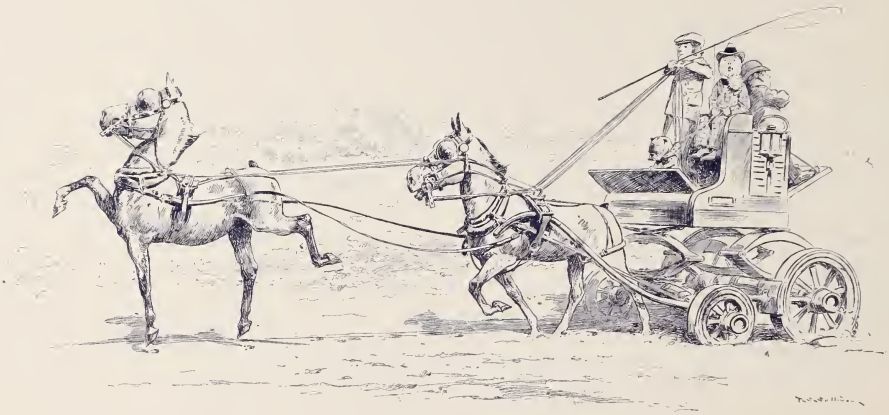
NOT LIKE OTHER MEN.

She: Papa's chief objection is that we could hardly get along on your small salary.
He: But I have a splendid digestion, and am perfectly willing you should do the cooking.

NOTHING
The world's appla

FAME.

not everything.



"Such a handy little twap just to wun about in, dontcherknow."

"My heart ith in it, and my thole, and love, and my life, and my very exiththenth ith in it!"
"Heavens, Johnny! No wonder it made that little boy tired!"

APROPOS.

He (consulting tea cup): Ah! you are to be married soon.

"Mercy me! to whom?"

"To me; I came to-day on purpose to tell you."

ONE THEORY.

He: Great heavens! I've been talking to you for three hours.

She: Oh, it seems only half that time.

He (insinuatingly): Why is that, I wonder?

"I suppose it's because one forgets so much faster than you talk."

LIFE'S COMEDY

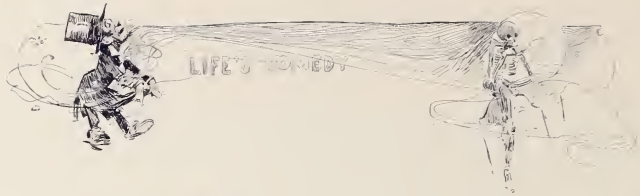
NOTHING LOST.

THE JESTER: You broke all the good resolutions you made last year.
THE FOOL: Yes, but I shall make others quite as good.

She : Does inspiration come to you at any particular time?
Mr. Scribbler (who writes): Yes, it usually comes with the bills about the first of the month.

AT THE CLUB.

"Sorry to disturb you, sir, but your governess is waiting—with the carriage, sir."



SUCCESS ASSURED.

DASHAWAY: Jagway has just invented a new cocktail. I saw him yesterday, and I guess it's going to be a success.

CLEVERTON: What did he say about it?

DASHAWAY: He couldn't talk.

HE MEANT WELL.

GRACE: I dislike flattery, you know.

ALGY: Aw—— but it is impossible to speak to you without flattery.

JUST NONSENSE.

Jane: Henry, what would you do if you should go to the post-office, buy a stamp, ask the man to stick it on for you and he refused?
Henry (who is very serious): What should I do? Stick it on myself.
Jane: I should stick it on the letter.

"Our landlady says she likes to see her boarders have good appetites."
"Well, I'm not surprised. Some women are naturally cruel."

"There, I am getting wet! That's just like you men; always thinking of yourselves!"

FAR WORSE.

"Jack was very disagreeable last night."
"Was he full of whisky?"
"It was worse than that. He was full of himself."

"Jack, what is the difference between you and the Prodigal Son?"
"Can't guess."
"You have never been given the fatted calf."

"Good morning."

"Good morning."

"I would like you to subscribe for a new edition of the 'Nude in Art.'"

"No, I don't want it. Try the theatrical agency on the floor below."

AFTER THE FUNERAL.

SHE: Yes, they were superb; but the idea of your getting Jacqueminots for a funeral!
HE: But the design was a gridiron, you noticed!

"Dickson resents your pitching into the devil, Bishop."

"On what ground?"

"Says it doesn't do to antagonize people we may have to ask favors of in the future."

He: French enables one to express such delicate shades of meaning, you know.
"Yes, I know. And such indelicate ones too."

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